

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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December 7, 2004

FROM: MICHAEL E. HAYS, Director
 Land Use Services Department/Advance Planning Division

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN SAFETY ELEMENT AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Consider a General Plan Safety Element Amendment to:
 - a) Amend 14 Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps to include revised State-designated Alquist-Priolo earthquake fault zones, a State-approved general geologic hazard area, and three County-designated fault hazard zones;
 - b) Amend 36 Hazard Overlay Maps to include Airport Safety Review Area 3 for each public use airport within the unincorporated area of the County; and
 - c) Amend the noise contours for five airports to conform with the published noise contours for each airport;
2. Adopt the Resolution amending the Safety Element of the County General Plan;
3. Adopt the Findings as recommended by the Planning Commission; and
4. File the Notice of Exemption.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Section 65358 of the California Government Code requires that mandatory elements of the jurisdiction's General Plan be amended no more than four times during any calendar year. The proposed changes recommended in this item represents the second amendment to the Safety Element of the San Bernardino County General Plan for 2004. There are three separate parts of this amendment to be considered by the Board of Supervisors: 1) changes to the Geologic Hazards Overlay Maps relative to fault hazard zones and rock fall areas, 2) changes to the Hazard Overlay Maps relative to airport safety, and 3) changes to the Hazard Overlay Maps relative to noise hazards. The Planning Commission heard this item on October 21, 2004 and unanimously recommended approval of all changes.

Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps

The proposed changes to the Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps includes an update to reflect State revised fault zone maps, State-designated rockfall hazards, and the inclusion of the County designation of three potentially active faults. The changes are routine, recurring updates of the County General Plan Maps that reflect revisions to State hazard mapping.

On May 1, 2003, the California Geological Survey adopted 11 revised Earthquake Fault Zone Maps within San Bernardino County in accordance with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. The Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps are being revised to incorporate the new State designations. The information contained in these amended maps became effective upon adoption by the State. Following adoption, affected County Geologic Hazard Maps were annotated with a note to refer staff and the public to the updated State maps. The approval of the resolution will officially incorporate these amended maps in the County General Plan.

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On December 8, 2003, the County Geologist received new maps prepared by the California Geological Survey for the community of Forest Falls showing revised rockfall susceptibility areas. Copies of these State maps are maintained with the County Hazard Maps at the public information counter and have been available for viewing by the public. This amendment is a routine addition of supplementary information to the County Geologic Hazard Maps. Since the Forest Falls area is already fully within a Geologic Hazard Overlay District, the new information does not change any of the development requirements that are already in place for the area. The State originally mapped the rockfall and debris flow in 1995, at the request of the County Geologist following the Landers-Big Bear Earthquake. The rockfall and debris flow hazards were recognized within the County's landslide hazard designation on the General Plan maps at that time. The recent revisions prepared by the State add further specificity to the type of rockfall and debris flow that may occur in Forest Falls. A debris-flow potential rating is included as well as a new debris avalanche designation. Due to the level of detail on the State map, the County Geologic Hazard Overlay Map for Forest Falls identifies the overall area that has been evaluated by the State and refers the interested party directly to the State maps. The approval of the resolution will officially incorporate by reference, this new supplementary geologic information onto the County General Plan Geologic Hazard Maps.

Another change included in this General Plan Amendment pertains to County-designated fault hazard zones. The County Geologist has recommended that the County adopt additional fault zones along fault traces designated as potentially active that may pose a hazard to development. Potentially active faults are not presently designated in the Alquist-Priolo mapping, but still may pose a hazard. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act requires the State of California to delineate earthquake fault zones, but the designations are currently limited to known active faults – those faults that are known to have ruptured approximately within the past 10,000 years. The Landers Fault is an example of what was classified as potentially active but was not mapped on the Alquist-Priolo maps until after the Landers Earthquake occurred. Designating potentially active faults provides for public notice and the ability to require geologic reports to determine whether these faults should be considered as active or inactive. Three known potentially active faults are recommended for inclusion within County-designated fault hazard zones – the Reservoir Canyon Fault in the Crafton Hills area, the Lake Gregory Fault, and the Lucerne Valley Fault. Two of the faults included in this proposed amendment are shown as potentially active on published geologic maps, such as the U. S. Geologic Survey. In addition, independent studies suggest that all three faults have the potential to rupture. The approval of the resolution will add these County designated fault hazard zones to the General Plan Maps.

All of these proposed changes to the Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps are consistent with General Plan Policy GE-1(a)(iv) which states that the County will “maintain clear and comprehensive mapping of all geologic hazards” and with General Plan Policy GE-7 which states “the County shall reserve the right to require site-specific geotechnical analysis and mitigation for development located contiguous to potentially active faults, if deemed necessary by the County Geologist.”

Hazard Overlay Maps

Four separate hazards are annotated on the Hazard Overlay Maps: fire, flood, airport safety, and noise. This proposed General Plan Amendment revises the airport safety review areas for all public use airports within the County, and the noise contours for five specific airports.

Airport Safety Review Areas

On January 1, 2004, Assembly Bill 2776 became effective changing the notification requirements for the sale or lease of properties around airports. According to the new law, any person who intends to offer land for sale or lease within an *airport influence area* is required to disclose the fact that the land is within such an area to any person buying or leasing the property. AB 2776 defines an airport influence area as the area in which “current or future airport-related noise, overflight, safety, or airspace protection factors may significantly affect land uses or necessitate restrictions on those uses as determined by an airport land use commission.” The County Airport Safety Review Area 3 (AR3) is consistent with the State definition of *airport influence area*. However, AR3 areas have not previously been delineated on the General Plan Hazard Maps. This proposed General Plan Amendment maps AR3 for all public use airports within the unincorporated area of the County.

Airport Noise

In conjunction with the changes to airport influence areas for the various airports within the County, changes to the noise contours for five airports need to be adopted to reflect revised contours that have been published for those airports. Three airports (Apple Valley, Barstow-Daggett, and Twentynine Palms) have published new noise contours in their respective Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Also, the Southern California Logistics Airport has published new noise contours due to the change from military to commercial aircraft. This proposed General Plan Amendment would add these contour lines to the hazard maps. The San Bernardino International Airport has not published new noise contours, but it has instead identified its airport influence area. The airport has determined that current noise contours that reflect commercial aircraft use rather than military aircraft will be well within the designated airport influence area. This proposed General Plan Amendment will remove the old noise contours that were established during the Norton Air Force Base era to reflect the noise patterns of military aircraft and replace them with the Airport Review Area 3 designation, which reflects the airport influence area.

CEQA Review

The proposed General Plan amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines. These amendments do not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment as they only amend 14 County Geologic Hazard Overlay Maps to recognize new earthquake fault zones that are already in effect. Furthermore, they map additional geologic hazard areas for the safety of the property owners and the public. They also amend 36 Hazard Overlay Maps to add Airport Safety Review Area 3 for all public use airports within the County. All of these changes are for the protection of the environment and to enhance the safety of the citizens of the County.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS:

1. The proposed safety element changes are in the public interest, and there will be a community benefit because they give the public additional information to the hazards that exist in the specific areas of each map. Other existing and permitted uses will not be compromised.
2. The proposed safety element changes are consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan as follows:

Policy GE-1(a)(iv): The County will maintain clear and comprehensive mapping of all geologic hazards.

Policy GE-7: The County shall reserve the right to require site-specific geotechnical analysis and mitigation for development located contiguous to potentially active faults, if deemed necessary by the County Geologist.

Policy AV-1: Airport Safety Review Areas are categorized as . . . [those areas] which [are] defined within adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plans, [or] . . . where there is no adopted Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, they are generally categorized [as defined in the County Development Code].

3. The proposed safety element changes do not conflict with provisions of the Development Code, or any applicable specific plan.
4. The proposed safety element changes will not have a substantial adverse effect on surrounding property.
5. The proposed safety element changes are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines as they do not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY OTHERS: The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of this project on October 21, 2004. It was reviewed by Deputy County Counsel Robin Cochran (387-8957) concurrently with the Planning Commission review. This item was reviewed by Deputy County Counsel Robin Cochran (387-8957) on November 22, 2004, and by the County Administrative Office, Patricia M. Cole, Administrative Analyst III, (387-5346) on November 23, 2004.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There are no financial impacts associated with the approval of this item.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): All

PRESENTER: Michael E. Hays, Director, 387-4141.